Aboriginal Tourism and Cross-Cultural Understanding Project

Prepared by: Turtle Island Tourism Company

January 2006

Federal-Provincial-Territorial Culture/Heritage and Tourism Initiative

Background

- The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Culture/Heritage and Tourism Initiative (FPTTI) was officially launched in November 2003 as a two-year pilot project that ended in October 2005.

- This partnership between all provincial and territorial ministries responsible for Culture and Heritage and the Department of Canadian Heritage is co-chaired by Manitoba and New Brunswick.

- Three working groups were created to implement this initiative:
    - The Aboriginal Cultures and Tourism Working Group (led first by Alberta and then Saskatchewan);
    - The Building Market-Readiness Capacity Working Group (led by Ontario); and
    - The Economic Benefits Distribution Research Working Group (led by British Columbia).

Products

- The Initiative's aim is to support partnering jurisdictions in ensuring their culture/heritage stakeholders are able to become active in tourism on their own terms.

- The products to date reflect input from each jurisdiction.

- These products were created to stimulate discussion and create opportunities for dialogue between culture, heritage and tourism counterparts.

- The FPTTI partners are responsible for disseminating the products and key messages within their jurisdictions as they deem appropriate.

- The FPT Culture/Heritage and Tourism Initiative Coordination Office is prepared to respond to requests. They can be contacted at FPTTI@pch.gc.ca

Benefits of the FPTTI

- Continued collaboration with tourism counterparts on culture/heritage-driven projects creates opportunities for increased information sharing and strategic partnerships. The FPTTI will continue to develop the tools and information that will enable FPT culture/heritage ministries to:

    1) Provide leadership on cultural and heritage aspects of tourism-related policy;

    2) assist the culture/heritage sector to build capacity in tourism; and,

    3) create and promote understanding that the promotion, retention, and support of Canada's cultures and the sustainability of tourism are mutually reinforcing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 5

BACKGROUND REPORT 8
- 1.0 Background 8
- 2.0 Methodology 10
- 3.0 Cultural Tourism Case Studies: Australia 10
  - 3.1 Reconciliation Tourism and the Marketing Approach 11
  - 3.2 Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park in North Queensland 11
  - 3.3 The Launch of the International Year of Ecotourism 2002 13
  - 3.4 Camp Coorong Race Relations and Cultural Education Centre 14
- 4.0 Cultural Tourism Case Studies: New Zealand 16
  - 4.1 The Aoriki/Mount Cook National Park 17
- 5.0 Cultural Tourism Case Studies: Canada 19
  - 5.1 Challenges facing Canada's ACT industry 19

SURVEY REPORT 22
- 1.0 Project Background 22
- 2.0 Methodology 22
- 3.0 Sustainable Cultural Tourism 23
  - 3.1 Aboriginal Ownership 23
  - 3.2 Aboriginal Control 24
  - 3.3 Community Acceptance and Desire 24
  - 3.4 Economic Sustainability 25
- 4.0 The Nature of Cultural Exchange 25
  - 4.1 Authenticity of the Message 26
  - 4.2 The Type of Cultural Exchange 26
  - 4.3 The Host's Motivation and Mandate 27
  - 4.4 Visitors' Expectations 27
  - 4.5 Visitors' Level of Understanding 28
  - 4.6 The Cultural Connection 29
- 5.0 Best Practices 29
  - 5.1 Community-Based Consultation 29
  - 5.2 Support Mechanisms/Tools 30
  - 5.3 Government Standards and Tools 30
  - 5.4 Cultural Training 30
  - 5.5 Protocols 31
  - 5.6 Tracking Methods 31
  - 5.7 Comments 31

(continued...)

ADVISORY CIRCLE REPORT 33
1.0 Executive Summary 33
2.0 Project Background 34
2.1 Advisory Circle Methodology 34
2.2 Advisory Circle Participants 35
3.0 Best Practices and Impediments --Delivering an Authentic ACT Product 35
3.1 Aboriginal Ownership and Control 36
3.2 "Preserve, promote and protect culture" 36
3.3 Community Consultation and Support 37
3.4 Aboriginal Languages 37
4.0 Best Practices and Impediments -- Educating Canadians About Aboriginal Culture 38
4.1 Development and Delivery of the Message 38
4.2 Educational Markets 39
5.0 Best Practices and Impediments -- Meeting Visitor Expectations 39
5.1 The "Welcome" Message 39
5.2 Meeting Visitor Expectations 40
6.0 Common Challenges / Identified Needs 41
6.1 Funding / Economic Sustainability 41
6.2 Human Resources and Capacity Development 42
6.3 Infrastructure 42
7.0 Recommendations and Actions 42
7.1 Increased Funding 42
7.2 Creation of an "Advisory Circle" 43
7.3 Communication 43
7.4 Evaluation 44
7.5 Marketing and Promotion 44

REFERENCES 45

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This multi-phased project was carried out over a one-year period and included original research, survey and in-person consultation components. In the first phase, international case studies were identified that highlighted both strategies and concerns regarding Aboriginal tourism as a tool of cross-cultural awareness. The second phase was a detailed survey of Aboriginal cultural tourism operators from across Canada to investigate examples of Aboriginal cultural tourism strategies and best practices. The final phase brought together some of these experienced Aboriginal cultural tourism operators as part of an Advisory Circle to identify critical areas of development required to achieve a sustainable Aboriginal cultural tourism sector in Canada.

PHASE 1: BACKGROUND REPORT

This phase compiled international case studies to gain a global perspective on the relationship between tourism and indigenous communities of New Zealand, Australia and Canada (though Canadian examples were limited). The case studies identified successful approaches, strategies and concerns by host operators and communities in their efforts to utilize tourism as a method of cross-cultural awareness. The research revealed common practices and challenges within the international Aboriginal cultural tourism industry regarding their efforts in reconciliation and education of the public through authentic interpretation of their culture.

PHASE 2: SURVEY REPORT

In order to gain greater insight into the issues identified in Phase 1, a national survey of Aboriginal cultural tourism organizations was launched. The survey was designed to reveal successful approaches, strategies and concerns of Aboriginal cultural tourism leaders in their efforts to use tourism as a method of cross-cultural awareness within Canada. An initial contact list of 120 operations across Canada was developed as the survey base. This list incorporated a broad range of Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences, ranging from private enterprises to community non-profit cultural centers, government-affiliated initiatives and non-governmental organizations, with representation across all regions of Canada. Sixty surveys were completed.

Key findings include:

- Eighty six percent (86%) of the respondents felt that the majority of the local community approves of the interpretation of the culture and their community in the context of the cultural tourism experience offered. Not surprisingly, host communities often protected the more sacred elements of culture and community from visitation and interpretation. Some of the more successful practices currently in use included community-based consultation on cultural interpretation; support mechanisms/tools to ensure cultural authenticity; cultural training for staff; protocols for visitors entering First Nation communities; and tracking visitors' reaction to the programming.

- Respondents indicated that their greatest challenge was the lack of financial resources to ensure the economic stability of their organization. In addition to lack of funding, respondents also cited lack of effective training resources and marketing support, operational concerns and existing infrastructure as barriers to successfully reaching the Canadian markets with their message.

- According to the survey results, a product's cultural authenticity was ensured by recognizing and respecting community-based processes. Community-based processes were identified as: approval by elders; involvement with cultural leaders; inclusion of Aboriginal people in the development and delivery of the product; and recognition of oral history. Other factors contributing to cultural authenticity include: cultural committee approvals and recommendations, performance evaluation tools, operating agreements, employee training manuals, guiding principles, cultural sensitivity training, and sustainable development strategies.

- Across Canada, a number of standards, tools and guides have been developed by federal, provincial and regional agencies that influence the cultural tourism industry. These include cultural standards, assessment tools, protocol developments, agreements etc. Approximately 25% of survey respondents utilized these tools to direct and influence development and delivery at the local level.

PHASE 3: ADVISORY CIRCLE REPORT

A select number of survey respondents were asked to participate in an Advisory Circle to further discuss the concepts covered in the survey. The Advisory Circle met in Gatineau, Quebec in October 2005.

Advisory Circle Participants
Eva Aariak, Pirurvik Centre
Linnea Battel, Xa'ytem Longhouse Interpretive Centre
Cindy Charlie, Tage Cho Hudan Interpretive Centre
Mike Côté, Mawandoeseg
Vania Gagnon, Riel House National Historic Site of Canada
Vera Kasokeo, Chief Poundmaker Historical Centre
Laurel Mould, Ksan Historical Village and Museum
Pam Ward, Metepenagiag Heritage Park
Paula Whitlow, Chiefswood National Historic Site

Most participants agreed that the economic benefits of their site are secondary to the positive social benefits, such as preservation, sharing, healing and increased feelings of self-worth. Key recommendations include:

- Access to other Aboriginal cultural tourism organizations and resources, through information sharing, networking, etc.

- Increased accessibility to existing funding programs, as well as increased funding levels. This may involve a coordinated, government-wide approach to a variety of funding related-issues, such as the criteria for eligibility, barriers created by the kind of wording and bureaucratic language used by governments, and accessibility of funding applications.

- Assistance in the incorporation of cultural tourism-related issues in community planning as well as the development and/or distribution of common guidelines and protocols to assist in the development of Aboriginal cultural tourism.

- Advisory Circle members strongly favour moving beyond research reports and exploratory surveys towards concrete actions, including pilot projects.

CONCLUSION

The majority of Aboriginal cultural/heritage tourism operators are not involved in tourism solely as a revenue generating activity, but also for the purposes of protecting and promoting cultural and community identity. However, it is clear that extensive capacity issues within Aboriginal cultural organizations hinder a full exploration of using tourism as a means to promote cross-cultural understanding. In conjunction with capacity issues on the supply side of the equation, on the demand end, misinformation and preconceptions hinder non-Aboriginal Canadians from seeking Aboriginal culture/heritage and tourism-related experiences. Key findings reveal:

- There is a critical need for long-term operational funding and support for program development and training initiatives, including mentoring and elder/youth programs, and assistance in developing and implementing evaluation systems, to ensure dynamic future development. Resolution of the problems facing Aboriginal cultural tourism operations may involve several government partners, not solely culture and heritage ministries; for example, Aboriginal cultural tourism projects exist within a complex funding environment in which several granting agencies may be involved.

- Communication between Aboriginal culture/heritage and tourism stakeholders is minimal.

- Aboriginal cultural tourism organizations need assistance with marketing as well as program and product development, and evaluation systems.

- While community support for culture/heritage organizations is extremely beneficial for long-term sustainability, a lack of guidelines and protocols to assist communities in the development of Aboriginal cultural tourism limits sustainable development.

BACKGROUND REPORT

1.0 Background

Tourism is an industry that is an important facet of our daily and economic lives. Its contribution accounts for providing $US3.6 trillion worth of economic activity and provides one in 12 jobs worldwide. Presently, tourism accounts for the largest force in the movement of people and brings these people into direct social exchanges. In essence, tourism touches every community, and every locality around the world. It is a major catalyst to cultural interactions around the world (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003a: 243).

International indigenous communities are recognizing the important role tourism can play in building bridges between cultures. In 1980, the Manila Declaration on World Tourism described tourism as a "vital force for peace and international understanding." This declaration was followed by the Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourist Code, adopted at the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Assembly in 1985, which cited tourism's contribution to "improving mutual understanding, bringing people closer together, and consequently, strengthening, international cooperation."[1]

In 1985, the Charter for Sustainable Tourism, drafted by the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism, recognized in its preamble that "...tourism affords the opportunity to travel and to know other cultures, and that the development of tourism can help promote closer ties and peace among peoples, creating a conscience that is respectful of diversity of culture and lifestyles."[2]

In 1999, *The Global Code of Ethics* for tourism presented to the WTO General Assembly concurred that tourism was continuing to play an important role in cross-cultural understanding in the statement "firmly believing that, through the direct spontaneous and non-mediatized contacts it engenders between men and women of different cultures and lifestyles, tourism presents a vital force for peace and understanding among the people of the world."[3]

Indigenous communities around the world are undertaking tourism-related activities to support cultural revival and economic sustainability and to increase cross-cultural awareness and understanding. While examining the relationship between indigenous heritage and culture and tourism themes of interpretation, authenticity, intellectual property rights, protection of traditional lands, and traditional knowledge became evident. As the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry in Canada is relatively young, there is an opportunity for key stakeholders to identify guiding principles that will ensure the benefits of tourism do not outweigh the benefits of cultural preservation in the process of development. "The achievement of sustainable indigenous tourism has predominantly focused on the need for development that is culturally sustainable, that is, owned, controlled, acceptable and desired by the indigenous communities affected, as well as economically sustainable" (McIntosh, 2003: 1).

"The 'exotic other'...has been the phenomenon of tourism, and in many countries, including Canada, colourful indigenous images have always been used to embellish the attractiveness of the country as a tourism destination" (Notzke, 2004: 29). Yet, the issue remains how to ensure that the indigenous nation whose culture and heritage are represented in these marketing

[1] As stated in Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 35.
[2] As stated in Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 36.
[3] As stated in Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 36

images also reaps the benefits of the tourism industry and does not remain a superficial icon (Notzke, 2004: 48-50).

In understanding the relationship between host nations and tourists, a further issue must be considered: the nature of cultural exchange. Butler and Hinch argue that cultural tourism is driven by the belief that "such activity facilitates understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous people."[4] That is, visitors' experiences of indigenous cultures improve their awareness, understanding and appreciation of indigenous situations on major issues. This may result in improved understanding and changes in attitudes and behaviors that can result in more equitable relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

Oral history of aboriginal people potentially provides a critical perspective in educating and creating cross-cultural understanding between various cultures. The question remains on the nature of the activity, and to what extent, if any, processes and mechanisms, e.g. elder's circles, traditional knowledge, were utilized to ensure that the interpretation of the culture was being conveyed in a sensitive manner that would recognize the values of education to connect various cultures and create cross-cultural understanding.

When examining tourists' appreciation of indigenous culture in New Zealand, three perspectives became apparent: the first, tourists' perceptions of host culture, second, the extent to which tourists are culturally motivated, and third, the beneficial experiences that tourists gain of host culture (McIntosh, 2003: 3). Perceptions of host culture can be understood by tourists' awareness, knowledge and images or impressions held of that culture. Furthermore, Dann argues that certain variables, such as repeater status or tourists' prior knowledge of a host culture indeed have some part to play in opening a certain type of tourist to cultural awareness of the way of life.[5] For example, national park managers in many countries worldwide regularly utilize interpretation as a technique for communicating the intrinsic links between people and the environment. This method of "learning enrichment" is used in the hope of reducing negative cultural impacts and increasing visitor awareness and respect for other cultures or significant places. Indigenous values for landscapes have been included within World Heritage nominations for areas such as Ulur-Kata Tjuta (Australia) and Tongariro (New Zealand). Managers have since then incorporated cultural values within visitor interpretation (Carr, 2004: 434).

While examining various indigenous cultural tourism products, themes of interpretation, authenticity, intellectual property rights, protection and education of traditional lands and knowledge were some of the issues identified. Carr argues that "appropriate, authentic interpretation has been regarded as a means of enhancing cross-cultural understanding and improving the quality of the visitor experience" (Carr, 2004: 434).

Some factors that influence the cultural tourism industry, cross-cultural understanding, and cultural revival include government legislation, policy, committees, deeds of recognition, consent, shared revenue, operating agreements, authenticity, skills and management training, ownership, intellectual property rights, indigenous identity or status, and protocols for the consultation process.

---

[4] Butler, R., & Hinch, T. (Eds.). "Tourism and indigenous peoples." London: International Thomson Business Press, 1996, p. 5, as stated in McIntosh, 2003: 2.

[5] Dann, G. M. S. "De higher the monkey climb, de more 'e show 'e tail: tourists' knowledge of Barbadian culture." In Global tourism behaviour. Edited by W. Husbands and M. Uysal. New York: The Haworth Press, 1994, p. 181-204. as stated in McIntosh, 2003: 5

2.0 Methodology

The obvious need to better understand the relationship between culture/heritage and tourism resulted in a federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) initiative in which the Aboriginal Cultures and Tourism Working Group (ACTWG) was established. The ACTWG was formed to research and develop the necessary tools that would strengthen the relationship between Aboriginal culture and heritage sectors and other tourism stakeholders.

The research for this report was conducted on behalf of the ACTWG to explore international case studies of cultural tourism experiences being utilized as a means to facilitate greater cross-cultural awareness. The consultants undertook an extensive literature review and identified a sampling of international strategies and initiatives in relation to cultural tourism as a cross-cultural awareness tool. The findings identify a number of challenges and opportunities consistent with Canada's Aboriginal cultural tourism industry. The compilation of research will assist the ACTWG and key stakeholders to formulate a framework for community consultation of cultural tourism products and organizations across Canada.

Case studies on cultural tourism in both New Zealand and Australia were examined in greater detail to identify successful approaches, strategies and concerns of host operators in their efforts to use tourism as a method for cross-cultural awareness. The research revealed best practices and unsuccessful efforts of various institutions and private enterprises within the cultural tourism industry that seek to reconnect and educate mainstream society by creating structural support for interpretation and authentic representation of culture. Although some of Canada's primary challenges and best practices were identified within the research, the consultants determined the most effective approach would be to develop the community consultation process and subsequent primary research findings to depict Canada's success in utilizing cultural tourism as a cross-cultural educational tool.

3.0 Cultural Tourism Case Studies: Australia

Australia recognizes that Aboriginal involvement in tourism has a different meaning than mainstream tourism operators and industry. When Aboriginal people engage in tourist activities, they may be affecting Native Title treaty rights and ancient traditions, but they may also be building the self-esteem of their youth through a revival of culture and a reconciled community in which their children can grow.

Higgins-Desbiolles argues that Aboriginal involvement in contemporary tourism needs to be understood within the context of Aboriginal politics, and history, stating, "Officially, the suggestion to explore tourism as a promising source for indigenous community development was articulated in the 1991 *Report of the Inquiry to Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* where it was seen as a promising source of self-esteem and economic opportunity" (2003b: 37).

This was followed by the National Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Tourism Industry Strategy (NATSITIS), which identified choice for the community in its involvement in the tourism industry, thereby providing structural support for economic independence and substantive measures for indigenous tourism policy (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 37). In brief, some beneficial outcomes from reports and strategies include the development of cultural coordinating committees, equity agreements, deeds of recognition, and cultural sensitivity training for visitors

entering into indigenous communities. In Australia, the concept of utilizing tourism to mend strained relationships between Aboriginal and mainstream society has been branded "Reconciliation Tourism."

3.1 Reconciliation Tourism and the Marketing Approach

Some recent initiatives in Australia that contribute to reconciliation tourism include a wave of travel guides to indigenous Australia, and festivals and events that focus on reconciliation and tourism ventures, such as Camp Coorong, which continues the work of dissolving the barriers between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. This approach is unique in the sense that it addresses the culture and heritage of the indigenous people within the host country, but at the same time targets both the domestic and international marketplace (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 40).

Recently, various publications introduced to the travel guide market are wholly focused on reconciliation through tourism, including: Paul Kaufman's *Traveling Aboriginal Australia: Discovery and Reconciliation,* which includes information about the reconciliation movement; and *Always Ask – Guidelines for Visitors to Indigenous Communities,* by Mic Dodson, which provides a description of places to visit by geographical regions of Australia and how to respectfully approach the communities profiled (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 41).

Reconciliation has also been a theme for many important festivals and events held in Australia. An example of a reconciliation-themed event is the *Festival of the Dreaming.* This festival gave a primacy of place to indigenous cultures that was intended to have a long-term impact on international demand for indigenous experiences which then may reverberate through the domestic market (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 41).

Lonely Planet, one of the world's largest publishers of travel guides, produced *Aboriginal Australia and the Torres Strait Islands: Guide to Indigenous Australia.* This guidebook is over 400 pages in length and provides the reader with a comprehensive overview of the salient issues concerning Aboriginal Australia before giving a detailed travel guide by geographical region. More importantly, it was produced in the spirit of reconciliation, as it took approximately three years in the making in order to commission indigenous writers, provide them with professional development and then consult with the appropriate elders in the locales before receiving final clearance from indigenous leaders Mic Dodson and Les Ahoy (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 41).

3.2 Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park in North Queensland

At the Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park in North Queensland, Australia, Djabugay community members are involved in the representation and presentation of their cultural heritage to a wide variety of national and international tourists. "The 25-acre park, which evolved from the Tjapukai Dance Theatre originally located in Kuranda, presents Djabugay culture through a museum; history, creation and dance theatres; a traditional camp; and a retail outlet that encompasses an art gallery" (Dyer et al, 2003: 83).

When the Djabugay people realized that the new park would present their culture to a greater extent than at the Tjapukai Dance Theatre, they wanted to ensure that the Djabugay people

would benefit economically and socially without being exploited. A deed was negotiated and signed between the Djabugay people and other Park stakeholders (Dyer et al, 2003: 86).

Best Practices

In order to avoid the exploitation of the Djabugay culture, an agreement was implemented specifically to establish the Djabugay Cultural Coordinating Committee (DCCC) to ensure culturally appropriateness and authenticity. The DCCC was also established to ensure that the Djabugay would have at least 50 per cent equity in the Park and that they would gain economically from the presentation of their culture, based on details within the agreement (Dyer et al, 2003: 86).

Reciprocity, timelines and contingencies should be established so that the cultural and intellectual property remains in the hands and control of the rightful owners. Ultimately, it is in the interest of the corporate owners and managers to nurture the culture that they promote for commercial gain (Dyer et al, 2003: 94).

This study suggested that the Park managers needed to recognize indigenous decision-making processes and acknowledge the cultural expertise of the their Djabugay employees and, in turn, the Djabugay employees needed to acknowledge the business expertise of managers. Management's requirement for the Djabugay to perform their cultural activities in an inappropriate way fueled the Djabugays' concerns about the modification of their culture to meet tourists' expectations.

Despite expressing concerns about a lack of control over when and how to represent their culture at the Park, Djabugay employees took pride in and enjoyed presenting their culture to others. They saw cross-cultural interaction between themselves and tourists as a means of reducing stereotypical impressions, thus enhancing understanding of their culture and community. Even though they were troubled by misrepresentation of their culture, they believed that the Park's operations had instilled pride and a renewed interest in cultural revival.

Impediments and Resolutions

Djabugay dancers see "themselves as ambassadors for the people [and]...do not see their dancing for the Tjapukai Theatre as just a job like any other," thus creating conflict between traditional cultural values and a Westernized work ethic (Dyer et al, 2003: 84).

Mainstream employment in Australia presupposes literacy and proficiency in English, strong communication skills and the adoption of cultural styles that may be difficult for Aboriginal people to attain or even desire. The English spoken by the Djabugay people varies from Standard English to Aboriginal English, which can potentially lead to misunderstandings between employer, employee and tourist. Training has since been advocated to resolve issues between these evident cross-cultural differences resulting in greater cross-cultural awareness and recruitment of Aboriginal in permanent positions in a diverse range of occupations according to their needs (Dyer et al. 2003: 86).

Although one Djabugay person claimed that Djabugay employment at the Tjapukai Park should be at all levels, research revealed the issue was not specifically referred to in the agreement. Attempts to secure benefits for the Djabugay were made prior to the Park via the agreement.

There was also uncertainty about the actual nature of the Djabugays' equity. The Park Agreement specifies that the Djabugay community may acquire 100 percent equity in the Park "over an agreed time period at fair market value," however, no time frame had been stipulated, and the Djabugay people do not have the means or adequate resources to purchase shares, therefore they remain minority shareholders. Furthermore, Djabugay people lack power and influence in the Park because of their minority shareholding, minimal voting powers, and lack of employee and managerial representation (Dyer et al, 2003: 87).

There is confusion over Djabugay identity because of distinctions between Djabugay and non-Djabugay indigenous communities and even between traditional and contemporary Djabugay people. This led to an issue over the number of Djubugay involved in the parks activities. Altman argues that cultural sustainability is dependant upon Aboriginal control. It is imperative therefore that indigenous communities do not sign away rights to the their intellectual property and cultural traditions. Furthermore, he suggests that many Aboriginals want to gain financially from indigenous tourism while at the same time minimizing its socio-cultural costs, but economic advancement for Aboriginal people is limited in absence of outright ownership or majority representation.[6]

Currently the Djabugay community does not operate as an equal partner in the Park, therefore they do not control or benefit fully from the presentation of their culture for tourist consumption. This issue of identity is complex and is particularly problematic for both Park management and the Djabugay community in this context. Anyone involved in cross-cultural tourist ventures needs to be mindful of this issue and its implications on current and future generations, which demands a genuine commitment to ongoing negotiations and consultations that recognize different attitudes and decision-making processes (Dyer et al, 2003: 87).

3.3 The Launch of the International Year of Ecotourism 2002

The Objective

In 2002, the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE) was designated by the United Nations in order to highlight the potential of ecotourism to contribute to economic development and conservation of the environment. The Ecotourism Association of Australia and the Commonwealth Department of Tourism led the Australian IYE 2002 initiative, with the South Australian Tourism Commission (SATC), Aboriginal Tourism Australia, and Tourism Task Force as supporting agencies. SATC selected the indigenous Coorong region, Godfrey's Landing in Coorong National Park, as the venue to showcase nature-based ecotourism (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 251-252).

Impediments and Resolution

Concerns by the indigenous peoples, the Ngarrindjeri, were raised, including the exclusion of consultation with indigenous people on the planning and implementation of the event. Even though the Ngarrindjeri were recognized throughout the tourism brochure and planning documents as traditional owners of the land, and frequent mention was made to consult with them, they were not consulted. During the planning stages, the Ngarrindjeri were only invited to

[6] Altman, J. "Tourism dilemmas for aboriginal Australians." Annals of Tourism Research, 16, 4 (1989): 18 as stated in Dyer et al, 2003.

give the traditional welcome and to perform some traditional dances. This cultural insensitivity was distressful and offended leaders of the Ngarrindjeri community. The Ngarrindjeri were able to diplomatically express their concerns and expectations of cultural protocols. Ultimately they agreed to participate, further allowing ecotourism on their lands. The Ngarrindjeri's issues and concerns encompass not only economic benefits, but also address traditional values, culture and survival (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 252).

3.4 Camp Coorong Race Relations and Cultural Education Centre

Since its involvement in tourism in the 1990s, Camp Coorong has been cited as one of the five most successful Aboriginal tourism ventures in Australia, and has received a number of state and national tourism awards. Visitors are local, state and national visitors who comprise the domestic market, as well as international visitors arriving from 45 nations (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 254-255).

The Objective

Camp Coorong Race Relations and Cultural Education Centre was established in 1985 as a place for Southern Australia's school children to visit and learn about Ngarrindjeri culture and history. Their long-term objective is that this experience would contribute to reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians; however, they have since expanded their reach to serve a variety of clients, including university students, environmental groups, reconciliation groups, non-governmental organization, and tourists (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 254).

Best Practices

While Camp Coorong provides many economic benefits, such as employment and skill development, through tourism, it is mainly motivated by the achievement of reconciliation, cultural maintenance and revival, and positive futures for Ngarrindjeri youth. These outcomes are secured by offering, in addition to the usual accommodation and tourism services, a non-threatening, yet challenging insight into Ngarrindjeri historical experience, cultural values and traditions through bush tucker walk, tours of the Keeping Place (Cultural Museum), basket weaving workshops and tours of Ngarrindjeri country (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 254).

Stories of the Ngarrindjeri people include social exclusion of Ngarrindjeri and other Aboriginal peoples, and the environmental degradation by society, with an appeal to move visitors to support life ways more harmonious and sustainable. Perhaps the most important tour program for the Ngarrindjeri is visits by indigenous groups which include members of the Ngarrindjeri community who come to re-connect with their culture and country. Australian indigenous groups and indigenous people from around the world come to learn and share their experiences, thereby enabling global networks to be forged (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 254-255).

Camp Coorong does not seek "to grow" the business or increase profits in the way that others do. It can be suggested that Camp Coorong refuses to be disciplined by the imperative of market civilization. Moreover, by seeking to secure reconciliation and forge global networks through their activities at Camp Coorong, the Ngarrindjeris' efforts have been characterized as

co-opting tourism and globalization for its own purposes and thereby occurring one site in the global web of 'new counter-movements'" (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 255).

Impediments & Resolutions

Community commitments take precedence over tourist bookings, so Camp Coorong does not meet the "reliability" criteria of conventional tourism operators (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003b: 255).

For the Ngarrindjeri people of Australia, land is not a resource, nor is it a piece of real estate that is designated by recreational zoning. With this traditional teaching in mind, the value of the relationship between stakeholders and indigenous people is an important facet in the development of cultural heritage products. Stakeholder theory implies that corporations have responsibilities to members of a society and that they must establish responsible relationships with entities affected by them. This theory is apparent in the foundation for the SATC, and the National Parks and Wildlife South Australia, various government agencies, industry associations and others to follow. However, this technique only provides an illusion of empowerment for the Ngarrindjeri community. As Ngarrindjeri elder, Tom Trevorrow, stated:

> We are not stakeholders, we are the Indigenous people of this land. I would like us to be seen as the Indigenous custodians rather than as stakeholders. So don't put us in the category of the BP Roadhouse or the caravan parks or the motels or the tour operators. You put us in the category of the custodians, Indigenous people, because we have more at stake here, we have our culture and our heritage which is in the land, the waters, the trees, the birds and the animals. We don't look at the land with a dollar concept, how the other people look at the land...I think in the outcome report we were still written down as stakeholders. We were not given full and proper recognition and if we had input into the development that plan we would have said: "Either you put us down as the custodians of the land – or you don't put us in there at all."[7]

Tom Trevorrow's statement reveals that in order to avoid negative impacts during and after the development of cultural heritage products, consultations that take place between industry stakeholders need to remain culturally sensitive, and reverberate in shared operating and partnership agreements which truly honour them as the custodians of their own lands and culture.

[7] Thomsen, D. A. "Care or Control? Ngarrindjeri participation in natural resource planning." Adelaide: University of Adelaide, Honours thesis (unpublished), 2001, p. 115 as stated in Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003a: 251.

4.0 Cultural Tourism Case Studies: New Zealand

Research on New Zealand's involvement indigenous tourism was derived from "Tourists' appreciation of Maori culture in New Zealand," by Alison J. McIntosh, which explored the nature of the demand for indigenous tourism experiences with particular attention to the appreciation of indigenous culture gained by tourists. The research explored in-depth interviews with tourists visiting New Zealand to examine tourists' motivations, perceptions, and experiences of Maori culture both prior to and following the tourist experience. The focus for development and marketing indigenous tourism in New Zealand include: the authenticity of products, Maori consent, utilization of management tools, interpretation, and the interaction between tourists and the cultural experiences, all of which are policy based, with some activities being implemented through the Department of Conservation.

The policy basis for indigenous culture in New Zealand is "The Treaty of Waitangi," which was signed by representatives of Maori tribes and the British government in 1840. Claims with the Waitangi tribunal is based on grievances from the Treaty and have resulted in the Crown returning land, providing financial compensation or instigating processes such as reinstating Maori place names. These claims are supported by many Maori, for whom such names represent traditional ties with the land. A Deed of Recognition between the Maori and Park managers, and a *Topuni* (or statutory cloak of values and association) for the Aoraki/Mount Cook was enacted as a result of the 1988, Ngai Tahu Cairns Settlement Act, thus providing a catalyst to recognize and advance the understanding of Maori culture and tradition, thereby advancing cultural tourism in New Zealand (Carr, 2004: 433).

Objective

"Generally, the Maori have had long history of involvement in New Zealand tourism." The extent in which the Maori people have been involved in tourism has been categorized as: entertainment, arts and crafts, display of taonga, cultural interpretation and accommodation operations, indicating the involvement of the Maori is important focus for tourism in New Zealand (McIntosh, 2003: 4).

Best Practices

"Tourism is seen as a major source of potential economic growth and independence for indigenous peoples in New Zealand. This is exemplified in the greater focus given in public policy to increasing the level of indigenous involvement in the tourism industry and in the search for development options" (McIntosh, 2003: 1).

Guidebooks, such as the Lonely Planet guides, and film or television are the most frequently reported sources of awareness of the Maori culture. Other sources include New Zealand's association with rugby, discussion with friends, relatives or other travelers, or, from learning about Maori culture at school (McIntosh, 2004: 5). There is some evidence to suggest that tourists were most interested in points of cultural difference, such as Maori history as well as contemporary lifestyle and visual aspects of Maori culture such as dance performances/*haka, art,* crafts, and *hangi*. Generally these attractions represent the traditional products or staged experiences of Maori culture (McIntosh, 2004: 7).

Impediments & Resolutions

McIntosh suggests that tourists visiting New Zealand seek an experience that is more relevant with the traditional aspects of Maori culture that constitute a point of difference from other cultures (McIntosh, 2004: 7). Authenticity or an experience that was "not artificial" was also felt to be a significant aspect of experiencing Maori culture (McIntosh, 2004: 9).

Some tourists' responses to surveys taken on their experiences of Maori culture indicated that they would have liked to see the Maori tourists experience as more of way of education about the indigenous peoples of New Zealand. "You feel your learn the culture more because the [the Maori] are teaching you." "Because that's the authentic way of getting to know them" (McIntosh, 2004: 10).

In the context of the tourist interaction, previous studies of the tourist perspective on indigenous tourism have provided increasing evidence that tourists demand direct contact with indigenous people and meeting them in a genuine manner. "Interacting with Maori people is most important because that is the only way you learn about culture; from having interaction with that culture" (McIntosh, 2004: 10).

When further questioned as to what the respondents meant by an "authentic experience" they expressed the desire to "get personally involved in the experience; experience the culture in its natural landscape; as having original values and experiencing the daily life; preferring to have 'incidental contact' with Maori people" (McIntosh, 2004: 10). Furthermore, respondents indicated that it was important to them to have a Maori perspective or interpretation provided on tours, and that perspective be "authentic" and be given by a Maori person which would be a contrast to a visit at a museum where it is not a first hand account of the tradition being passed on to by a member of the indigenous society (McIntosh, 2004: 10).

While authentic cultural tourism products as indicated above, may attract a wider visitor market for indigenous tourism, Ryan and Huyton argue that this strategy could lead to the simplification of Aboriginal culture and place the Maori people at risk of loss of control over indigenous tourism.[8] "Less formally structured or less staged cultural experiences that allow both tourist and host to communicate and interact in a meaningful manner, in what may be termed an 'exchange of sincerity', may constitute the most appropriate development option for indigenous, thus effecting the ability of tourism encounters to be mutually beneficial for host and tourist alike" (McIntosh, 2004: 13).

4.1 The Aoriki/Mount Cook National Park

The research conducted on Aoriki/Mount Cook National Park by Anna Carr presents an overview of how the national park interpretation in New Zealand is incorporating Maori perspectives of cultural landscapes. Since 1987, when the Department of Conservation (DOC) was established, the interpretive material containing information about the relationship between local *iwi* (Maori tribal groups) and natural areas has increased. The DOC has helped to ensure that the interpretation of Maori culture is conveyed through Maori perspectives and that the cultural values for the landscape is accurate and authorized by *iwi* members (Carr, 2004: 432).

[8] Ryan, C., & Huyton, J. "Tourists and Aboriginal people." Annals of Tourism Research, 29, 3: 631-647 as stated in McIntosh, 2004: 13.

Objective

The natural values of the area is one of the reasons why Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park was designated as a national park (Carr, 2004: 439). The Park was established in 1953, and consists of 70,000 hectares of glaciated, alpine terrain; this scenic quality makes it one the most popular destinations in the South Island of New Zealand. The park receiveds approximately 300,000 visitors on an annual basis. At the Aoriki/Mount Cook National Park, DOC staff aim to (1) increase visitors' understanding of the Maori relationship to the land and (2) direct appropriate visitor behavior in the destination location (Carr, 2004: 432-437).

Best Practices

Since the mid 1990s, the DOC has encouraged the active participation of local *iwi* groups at all stages of the interpretation process from initial planning to the actual delivery of information. DOC staff and some tourism concessionaires instigated consultation with appropriate *iwi* representatives to gain consent and ensure any cultural information shared was accurate and appropriate to the specific geographical region before passing on such information (Carr, 2004: 436).

A Deed of Recognition placed the onus of responsibility on land mangers and others to consult with Ngai Tahu over the use of the Topuni Area. Consequently, consultation was a critical step in the process of producing interpretative material that may affect the *mana* (i.e. power, prestige) of Ngai Tahu. Protocols have since been developed to guide DOC management of *taonga* (things of value), *mahika kai*, and historic resources, for visitor and public information associated with the Ngai Tahu (Carr, 2004: 440).

A *Topuni* or statutory cloak of values and association for the Aoraki/Mount Cook was enacted as a result of the 1988 Ngai Tahu Cairns Settlement Act to enhance the *mana* of the *iwi* and ensure their authority to participate in management decisions. The *Topuni* includes:

- A statement of Ngai Tahu values in relation to the area
- A set of principles aimed at ensuring the Department avoids harming or diminishing these values
- Specific actions which the Director General of Conservation has agreed to undertake to give effect to this principles (Carr, 2004: 440)

Impediments and Resolutions

The process of determining what information is suitable for public consumption continues to be a concern for Maori people. Disputed Treaty settlements contribute to the debate amongst contesting *iwi* groups over which aspect of *iwi* heritage is appropriate for communication to visitors (Carr, 2004: 437).

Prior to reaching Aoraki/Mount Cook, there is limited information that visitors might access about the cultural heritage or the special relationship of the Ngai Tahu to the mountain. Since the mid-1990s, several travel guides have mentioned the mountain's cultural significance, but not in significant detail. An example of limited cultural interpretation is a kiosk located within the park at Lake Pukaki (Carr, 2004: 439).

5.0 Cultural Tourism Case Studies: Canada

Aboriginal communities across Canada are increasingly turning to tourism development as a means to pursue both economic interests and cultural revitalization. Despite the obvious benefits, participation in the tourism industry raises issues and concerns for Aboriginal communities, varying from the socio-economic and cultural benefits to concerns relating to the maintenance and respect for traditional values, authenticity and impacts on future generations to name just a few. The significant increase in tourism has led many Aboriginal communities to seek assistance in developing strategies that will empower the community to harness and support Aboriginal cultural revival, sustainability, and cross-cultural awareness and the opportunity to build connections between the Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal public.

Through the research, it became evident that Canadians can share their own best practices in sharing their culture with other Canadians in a way that strengthens cross-cultural ties through tourism experiences. However, rather then offer a limited view of Canada's contributions to cross-cultural education through tourism gathered through secondary research, the consultants felt that it was prudent to wait until the completion of the primary research through the community consultation. They are confident that this outreach will provide case studies, best practices, impediments and resolutions that can share the story on the effectiveness of Aboriginal tourism in building relations between Aboriginal communities and the remainder of Canada. Nevertheless, in order to help frame some of the questions for the community consultation, some of the more common challenges that were discovered through the research to help identify best practices and guide discussion on these matters have been identified.

5.1 Challenges facing Canada's ACT industry

✧ Community Support and Consultation

All Aboriginal tourism operations must consider the impacts that they will have on the community whose culture is represented, whether they are private enterprise or community based. "ACT....involves balancing two competing forces: cultural integrity and preservation versus commercialization of culture. This paradox of competing forces necessitates the engagement of Aboriginal communities in the tourism sector must occur on their own terms and at their own pace, since it is their own existence as distinct people at stake. This spirit and intent can ground community-based approaches to developing an Aboriginal tourism sector, especially instances where culture is impacted" (Karhakeron Diabo, 2004).

✧ Determining Community Boundaries

All reports indicate that one of the most important steps to ensuring long-term sustainability of the industry with the least impact on the community and culture being portrayed is to determine in advance what each community is willing to share with visitors. "Protect what is sacred. A community meeting, organized by the cultural centre or band office, can bring concerns out in the open. If the local community is strongly opposed to sharing a sacred site with the public, or does not feel comfortable with tourists wandering around the village, this needs to be discussed at the beginning. A plan for protecting certain heritage sites, or restricting access to certain parts of the community will ease the fears of wary members" (Hager, 2004). Of course, with

Aboriginal communities across Canada, this consultation must include the "keepers of our culture," the elders, in order to benefit future generations.

✧ **Perceived lack of quality and limited market awareness**

There is considerable demand for Aboriginal tourism experiences with travel trade intermediaries, but there is limited knowledge as to what experiences are available, and to what degree those experiences meet international standards. There is also a perceived lack of reliability and consistency, particularly in view of the need for advance planning and long-term supplier commitment (Notzke, 2004: 38).

✧ **Question of Aboriginal Ownership or Content**

Since the 1990s there has been an ongoing debate on Aboriginal tourism as many communities have been adamant that the concept of 'Aboriginal tourism' should be used to designate only those tourism ventures which are characterized by Aboriginal ownership and control. They may or may not exhibit a sense of place and cultural context that can give a competitive advantage (Notzke, 2004: 31).

✧ **Community's Primary Focus**

All "reserves" have their own cultural institutions and the way the communities relate to it, such as the Peigan's Oldman River Cultural Centre and the Blood Tribe's Ninastako Cultural Centre, whose mandate is directed toward the preservation of tribal heritage. However, most often the focus of these institutions is twofold – cultural renewal of the native community and sharing that culture with the general public (Notzke, 2004: 35).

✧ **Social Politics within Community**

The history of Aboriginal people in Canada is a significant factor that determines the social and political environment for tourism. In the case of Alberta's Treaty Seven regions, the environment is complex and generally fails to provide support to communal or individual developments in the tourism field (Notzke, 2004: 36).

✧ **Misrepresentation of Culture (Authenticity)**

A further impediment in Canada is the misunderstanding of indigenous culture by tourists, which tend to confuse social events with religious practices. Events or festivals such as pow wows have evolved to a social event. On the other hand, traditional religious practices such as the sundance are restricted events for tribal members. The tourist thereby misinterprets the indigenous culture (Notzke, 2004: 35).

✧ **Internal Operating, Capacity and Skills**

Aboriginal artisans and craft producers face numerous issues, such as the "limited availability of traditional raw materials, lack of financial and business management skills, finances and marketing, educating the market about the effort involved in producing certain items, and competition with mass-produced 'native type,' souvenirs...The most serious issue is the challenge of creating contemporary forms of traditional designs, and in that process the ability to not succumb to the temptation of adopting outsiders' stereotypes of themselves for financial gain (Notzke, 2004: 36).

Some operators such as the Chief Chinki Restaurant and Arts and Craft Centre, Nakoda Guest Lodge and Conference, and the Stoney Indian Park (camp ground) reveal internal operating issues such as lack of site preparation, not purposefully marketed and promoted, and some of these sites are operating well below capacity. Some other facilities have existed for decades, assuming a low profile, known only to insiders (Notzke, 2004: 36). Many Aboriginal tourism businesses across Canada report similar internal operating and management issues revolving around human resources, marketing, training and community tourism capacity.

SURVEY REPORT

1.0 Project Background

The need to better understand the relationship between culture/heritage and tourism resulted in the formation of a federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) initiative in which the Aboriginal Cultures and Tourism Working Group (ACTWG) was established. ACTWG was formed to research and develop the necessary tools that would strengthen the relationship between Aboriginal culture and heritage sectors and other tourism stakeholders.

The initial research undertaken in Phase One of this project included the exploration of international case studies to gain a global perspective on the relationship between tourism and indigenous communities of New Zealand, Australia and Canada, though research available in Canada was limited. The case studies identified successful approaches, strategies and concerns by host operators and communities in their efforts to utilize tourism as a method of cross-cultural awareness. The research also revealed best practices and challenges within the cultural tourism industry in their efforts in reconciliation and education of the public through the authentic interpretation of their culture. Although some of Canada's primary challenges and best practices were identified within the research, the consultants determined the most effective approach would be to develop a community consultation process.

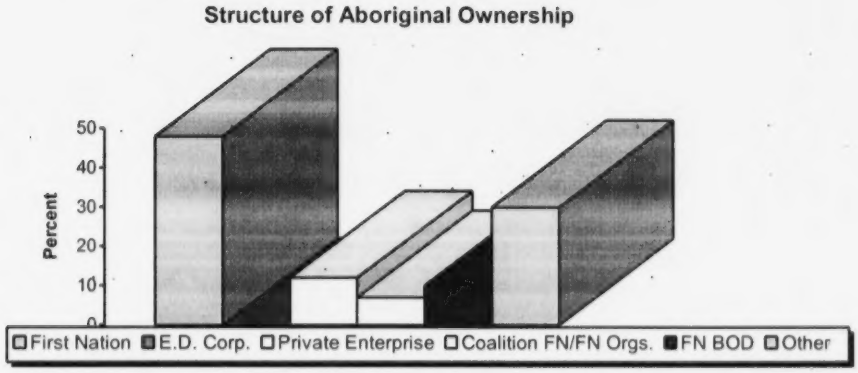
In order to gain greater insight into the issues, a national survey of Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences was launched as the second phase of this project.

2.0 Methodology

The national survey was designed to reveal some successful approaches, strategies and concerns of Aboriginal cultural tourism industry leaders in their efforts to use tourism as a method of cross-cultural awareness within Canada. An initial contact list of one hundred and twenty Aboriginal cultural tourism initiatives across Canada was developed as the survey base. The initial database incorporated a broad range of Aboriginal cultural tourism sectors from private enterprises to community non-profit cultural centers, government affiliated initiatives and non-governmental organizations with representation across the all regions of Canada.

Over a twelve-week period, the consultants were successful in implementing the survey with sixty respondents, continuing to ensure representation from the four regions and various sectors that comprise Canada's Aboriginal cultural tourism industry. While the survey developed was approximately 15 minutes in length, a number of the respondents demonstrated significant interest and comments that engaged them in discussion lasting 30 to 40 minutes on the topic.

Through the survey process, ten participants were identified who offered exceptional insight and best practices within the industry to participate in the next phase of the project: *The Advisory Circle*. A meeting of the Advisory Circle will provide further insight and direction on the issues and identify potential next steps.



3.0 Sustainable Cultural Tourism

An important theme in the research findings of Phase One was the identification of the elements of a "sustainable" cultural tourism industry that presents an authentic portrayal of the indigenous community's culture with no long-term negative effects on the culture and community. When speaking of the role of culture and heritage in a tourism context, this is one of the primary concerns. McIntosh states that, "the achievement of sustainable indigenous tourism has predominantly focused on the need for development that is culturally sustainable, that is, owned, controlled, acceptable and desired by the indigenous communities affected, as well as economically sustainable" (McIntosh, 2003: 6).

Within this context, findings within this survey reveal that the Aboriginal cultural tourism industries in Canada encompass the elements required for a sustainable Aboriginal cultural tourism industry. However, in light of these findings, it is necessary to further consider some of the industry barriers including economic and infrastructure support, which can directly impact the long-term sustainability and maintenance of operations. A long-term sustainable approach will enable these operations to focus their efforts on increasing awareness of Aboriginal culture and heritage within the Canadian public, and at the same time, advancing the economic growth of the cultural tourism industry within Canada.

Below, we highlight the survey responses that reflect the elements of culturally sustainable tourism industry in Canada.

3.1 Aboriginal Ownership

Sixty-five percent (65%), of respondents indicated that their organization was owned in full or more than 51% by either a: First Nation, Aboriginally-owned Private Business, Coalition of First Nations and/or Organizations.

Inclusive of this 65%, 48% indicated ownership in full or majority by a First Nation, 12% as an Aboriginal Private Enterprise, 7% by a coalition of First Nations and/or organizations and 10%ownership (full or majority more than 51%) by an Aboriginal Board of Directors.

"Other" responses include thirty percent (30%) that categorized ownership as belonging to federal and provincial institutions, such as Parks Canada, Nunavut Government, Province of Newfoundland, and the City of Quebec. Respondents indicated that ownership also comprised agreements between First Nations and the federal and provincial institutions and some respondents answered yes to both First Nation ownership and other, indicating a flexibility to define Aboriginal ownership and control.

3.2 Aboriginal Control

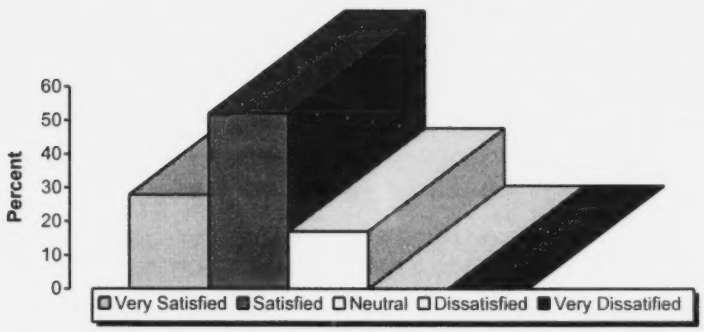
Seventy percent (70%) of respondents indicated that their organization/institution currently retains between ***76 and 100% Aboriginal ownership and control***. While another 3% indicate 51 to 70% ownership and control, another 3% indicate 1 to 25% Aboriginal ownership and control.

Further survey results indicate that 72% of organizations/institutions maintain that Aboriginal people hold the majority of management positions.

3.3 Community Acceptance and Desire

Eighty six percent (86%) of the respondent's felt that the majority of the local community supports and approves of the interpretation of the culture and community in the context of the cultural tourism experience offered (indicating that they understood the community to be either very satisfied or satisfied on how their culture and community were portrayed).

Organization's Perception of Cultural Experience Impact on Culture and Community



Twenty-eight percent (28%) responded that the community would feel "very satisfied" with the impact of their business/organization on their community and culture. At the same time, 52% considered that the community would be "satisfied," further indicating that there could be some improvements to increase the success and impact of their business on the culture and community. Another 17% were "neutral" in their response of their organization's/business' impact on culture and community. No respondents indicated that the communities were "dissatisfied" and/or "very dissatisfied."

3.4 Economic Sustainability

While this survey was developed primarily to engage respondents more on the nature of the cultural exchange, economic sustainability and external influences affecting the economic sustainability of the industry were also considered. Some barriers identified by respondents were the lack of resources to ensure the economic stability of their organization. Specifically, many listed lack of funding, lack of effective training and marketing resources, as well as operations and infrastructure support as primary barriers in successfully reaching Canadian markets with their message.

The greatest barrier identified was difficulty in accessing financing for development/expansion, noted by 75% of respondents, followed by the lack of familiarity with Aboriginal people and Aboriginal attractions/experiences, with the remaining respondents indicating a low level of existing skills, and lack of training and/or material. Some other barriers included external factors such as band politics, government funding/criteria, and marketing resources, to name a few.

4.0 The Nature of Cultural Exchange

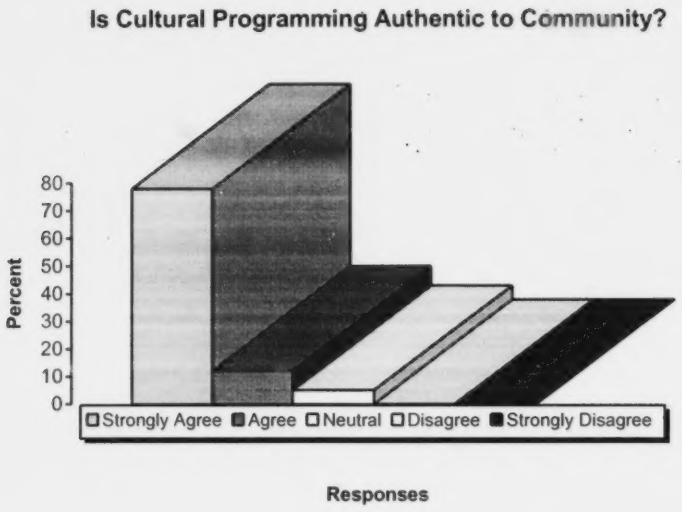
Butler and Hinch argue that cultural tourism is driven by the belief that "such activity facilitates understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous people".[9] That is, visitors' experiences of indigenous cultures improve their awareness, understanding and appreciation of indigenous situations on major issues. This may result in a more equitable relationship between indigenous and non-indigenous people.

Cultural exchange between Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal Canadians can tremendously increase understanding of Aboriginal people and cultures. The following internal and external factors would all impact the success of the exchange:

- The authenticity and accuracy of the information being shared
- The type of cross-cultural experience the visitor experiences
- The host's objective in developing and delivering the message
- The visitor's expectation in the cultural exchange (what they are looking for) and their current level of cultural awareness/understanding
- The host's perception of what the visitor's expectations are and ability to meet that need without compromising the integrity
- The connection: the success of the host in reaching the visitor

[9] Butler, R., & Hinch, T. (Eds.). "Tourism and indigenous peoples." London: International Thomson Business Press, 1996, p. 5, as stated in McIntosh, 2003: 2.

4.1 Authenticity of the Message



Seventy-eight percent (78%) of respondents "strongly agreed," with an additional 12% who "agreed" that their cultural programming offers an experience that is authentic to their community. The respondents that answered they "agreed" indicated that some improvements could be made. Five percent of the respondents remained neutral. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed.

4.2 The Type of Cultural Exchange

The ways in which organizations engaged visitors in a cultural exchange as part of their Aboriginal cultural tourism experience were almost as diverse as the communities and cultures themselves. Survey respondents outlined the wide range of programs that they offered Canadian visitors, which incorporated elements of Aboriginal culture and heritage, with the central theme to almost all programs being traditional knowledge sharing.

Some of the traditional knowledge methodologies utilized included storytelling, elder teachings, oral history, and historical/contemporary displays and exhibits. Other cultural activities are derived from traditional teachings, including traditional cultural presentations, traditional food preparation, historical reenactments etc. The information was interpreted and delivered in many formats, including cultural performances, guided and self-guided tours, interactive workshops and audiovisual presentations with a significant emphasis on personal interpretation and interaction by the host community. Not surprisingly, host communities often protected the more sacred elements of culture and community from visitation and interpretation.

4.3 The Host's Motivation and Mandate

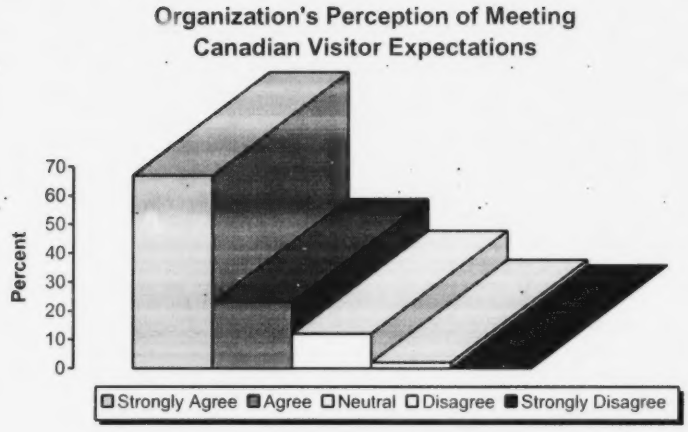
In revealing their broader mandate/mission for their involvement in Aboriginal cultural tourism, a majority of the respondents stressed their role as a cultural educator over a successful business, with primary objectives being to educate, preserve, renew Aboriginal culture and teachings for the Aboriginal community/youth, and to reduce stereotypes of Aboriginal people. Fewer respondents indicated that their primary motivation was to create employment, business and training opportunities, reconcile Aboriginal communities with non-Aboriginal communities or to generate revenues for businesses and community. The survey results below demonstrate the percentage of respondents who considered the statement to reflect their overall mandate and mission:

92% Educate Aboriginal communities about Aboriginal history and culture
90% Educate Canadians about Aboriginal history and culture
87% Preserve Aboriginal culture and teachings for future generations
83% Cultural renewal and awareness for the Aboriginal community
82% Foster a sense of pride – self-esteem building for Aboriginal youth
80% Reduce stereotypes of Aboriginal people to the non-Aboriginal public
78% Create employment opportunities within the Aboriginal community
77% Reconcile Aboriginal communities with the non-Aboriginal communities
65% Provide training opportunities for Aboriginal people and youth
63% Create business opportunities within the community
53% Generate revenues for businesses and community
53% Provide a place of healing

4.4 Visitors' Expectations

A vast majority of survey respondents – totaling 90%-- felt that their cultural programming was successful in offering Canadian visitors the Aboriginal experience they anticipated or expected. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents "strongly agreed" while 23% agreed they were successful, 7% were neutral in their response, and 2% felt they were not successful in meeting Canadian visitor expectations.

Notably, the 23% that agreed their organization/institution was "successful" in programming indicated that there were improvements that could be implemented to further the success, including maintenance of their operations and cultural programming to the Aboriginal community and general pubic.



Success of Organizations' Cultural Experience

4.5 Visitors' Level of Understanding

In order to determine the current level of understanding that the majority of Canadian (non-Aboriginal) visitors have of Aboriginal people prior to visiting an Aboriginal cultural tourism site, the following question was presented, "*What level of understanding do the majority of your Canadian visitors have of Aboriginal people and culture prior to their visit?*" Respondents had an option of selecting excellent, good, neutral, fair or poor.

Zero percent (0%) responded that the Canadian visitor had an "excellent" understanding, 12% indicated that that there was a "good" understanding, leaving an alarming majority of 60% falling between neutral and poor. Twenty-three percent (23%) were "neutral" in their response, 33% indicated there was a "fair" understanding, and 27% indicated that the understanding was "poor".

In reviewing the responses on the perceived level of understanding of Aboriginal people and culture, it can be interpreted that there is a significant lack of knowledge about Aboriginal people and culture by the Canadian public who is visiting the Aboriginal cultural tourism products surveyed.

In order to gauge the effectiveness of Aboriginal cultural tourism programming offered to the Canadian visitor, the following question was asked, "*Do you consider your program/experience an effective way to increase the Canadian level of understanding and appreciation for Aboriginal people, culture, and communities*?" Ninety two percent (92%) of the respondents agreed that their programming offered a cultural exchange that positively influenced the visitor's level of understanding. Sixty-five percent (65%) of the respondents "strongly agreed", 27% "agreed", 5% were "neutral" and 0% "disagreed". Results clearly indicate that the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry recognizes the important role that they can play to improve the Canadian public's awareness and understanding of Aboriginal culture and heritage.

4.6 The Cultural Connection

The cultural exchange can only be successful if the host and visitor actually have the opportunity to come together. In conducting the survey, the consultants felt it was important to determine the actual and potential reach of the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry to share their message with the Canadian public. The survey reveals that 92% of organizations surveyed receive Canadian visitors from beyond their own communities, representing all age groups from students to families and seniors.

The number of Canadian visitors to the sites was between 1 to 5,000, and 5 to 15,000 visitors per year with very few organizations having 15,000 visitors per year. This number is not surprising as the majority of Aboriginal cultural tourism initiatives would be considered small to medium size tourism organizations; however, they still hold a tremendous opportunity to reach the Canadian public. In estimating the reach to Canadian visitors (on the high scale of the estimated range provided in the survey) the 60 Aboriginal cultural tourism initiatives that were surveyed reach approximately 414,000 Canadians each year. This number alone demonstrates the tremendous opportunity that exists for Aboriginal cultural tourism to reach a large, diverse and expanding Canadian public with an authentic portrayal of Aboriginal cultures and heritage.

5.0 Best Practices

When engaging the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry across Canada, it became evident that there are a number of best practices being utilized by communities to ensure they are presenting an authentic message that portrays their community's unique heritage with other Canadians in such a way that they gain a greater understanding and appreciation. Some of the best practices that were being used included community-based consultation on cultural interpretation, support mechanisms/tools to ensure cultural authenticity, cultural training, protocols for visitors entering First Nation communities and tracking visitors' reaction to the programming.

5.1 Community-Based Consultation

In order to determine what the community was willing to share and how the information was going to be presented, some institutions engaged in a community-based consultation process. A high percentage of the respondents indicated that "Elders" and the "Elected Chief and Council" were included in the process, while less than 50% indicated that youth, women, First Nation General Assemblies, Band Council Resolution, Cultural Committee, Cultural Interpretive Centres, and Academics were part of the community-based consultation process. Interestingly, other forms of community-based consultation included Steering Committees, Education and Language Authorities, Hereditary Chiefs, and Memorandum of Understanding.

Who did organizations involve in their community consultation processes?

78% Elder
60% Elected Chief and Council
40% Academics

38% Cultural Committee
37% Cultural Interpretive Centre or Museum
33% Band Council Resolution
30% General Assembly at the First Nation
25% Youth/Council
23% Women Council

5.2 Support Mechanisms/Tools

To contribute to the successful development and delivery of cultural and heritage programs, communities used a number of support mechanisms and tools. As derived from survey results, the predominate support mechanism utilized to ensure authenticity of the cultural products was recognition and respect for community-based processes. In this survey, community-based processes were identified as approval by elders, involvement with cultural leaders, inclusion of Aboriginal people in the development and delivery of the product, and recognition of oral history.

Other factors contributing to cultural authenticity included cultural committee approvals and recommendations, performance evaluation tools, operating agreements, employee training manuals, established guiding principles, cultural sensitivity training, and sustainable development strategies. Community-based processes may very well indicate what type of tools or mechanisms are deemed appropriate by the host community to ensure authenticity.

5.3 Government Standards and Tools

Across Canada a number of standards, tools and guides have been developed by federal, provincial and regional agencies at various levels that influence the cultural tourism industry from both a culture/heritage perspective as well as a tourism perspective. These include cultural standards, assessment tools, protocol developments, agreements, etc. While the findings indicate that only a small portion, approximately 25%, employed these tools to direct and influence development and delivery at the local level, survey comments lead to the conclusion that this low percentage can be attributed to a lack of tools that directly support the unique needs of the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry. Some respondents indicated that criteria for funding by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Aboriginal Business Canada and other agencies have helped them to recognize opportunities and limitations for their operations. A limited number of respondents mentioned tools developed by Aboriginal Tourism Canada (ATC) or their Regional Aboriginal Tourism Association (RATA).

5.4 Cultural Training

The survey reveals a cross-section of best practices and tools used for cultural training and mechanisms used to ensure cultural integrity and authenticity in the delivery and interpretation of cultural tourism experiences across Canada. A majority, 65%, of respondents used some form of cultural training to ensure their front-line/interpretation staff provided accurate information.

The most common forms of cultural training were elders' circles (47%), followed by First Host (Aboriginal specific cultural tourism training), cross cultural awareness training, oral history, demonstrations/lessons in traditional activities and performances, and mentorship under cultural leaders.

5.5 Protocols

In other countries examined in Phase One of this project, establishing protocols for visitors entering an indigenous community proved to be a successful method of ensuring a positive exchange between guest and host community. In this survey, less than 50% identified the use of protocols to inform visitors of appropriate behaviour when entering an Aboriginal community. Of the total number of surveys completed, 40% identified "oral informal/word of mouth" as a method used in sharing the protocols with visitors. Other ways that protocols were shared included sharing circles, signage, case-by- case advice, travelers' guide, and verbal orientation upon arrival.

5.6 Tracking Methods

The only way for a tourism product to determine its success in meeting the expectations and needs of a visitor is to track visitor reaction and response to the program. A majority of respondents indicated that they used at least one form of tracking to help gauge the success of their programs. The responses were:

77% Guest book comments
40% Client survey / Feedback collections
25% Workshop evaluation forms
33% Certifications
18% Other
10% No tracking methods used
5% Accreditation

Other forms of tracking methods include attendance statistics, and one respondent identified a kiosk as a means to track visitors.

5.7 Comments

Many of the respondents clearly felt that Aboriginal cultural tourism provides positive experiences that help to expand the level of understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures and heritage within the visiting Canadian public. General observations by participants further acknowledge the added value of traditional knowledge, authenticity, and visitor interaction as "vital" to the experience. Respondents also acknowledged the stereotypical attitudes they encounter and overall lack of understanding about Aboriginal people, culture and communities.

The following comments are based on the question, *"Do you feel that Aboriginal tourism experiences can play a role in building connections between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians?"* They offer additional insights.

"Yes, It creates awareness for school groups, older visitors, and also helps them to understand the socio-economic and political impacts that contribute to the struggle of First Nation people."

"Yes, within our local towns, there are no Aboriginal teachings. Unfortunately this contributes to stereotypes, and racism. Cultural tourism has provided more knowledge about Aboriginal culture and heritage."

"Yes, there is an awakening to Aboriginal culture. People are looking for a value added product. The past history of colonization and political social structure created a prison wall to hide Aboriginal people. So anybody outside who came in to Aboriginal communities brought in preconceived ideas. Cultural tourism destroys that misconception."

"Yes, as long as there are opportunities for non-Native people to get involved, it educates and helps to provide a healthier relationship between non-Aboriginal people and Aboriginal people."

"Yes, Aboriginal tourism is sharing Aboriginal history as told by Aboriginal people themselves. Now tourists want to experience the real history of the geographic region. It is an ongoing process for our Aboriginal people and the rest of Canada."

"I totally agree. People don't understand the evolution of First Nation peoples, there is a lack of education about culture. There is not enough information on Aboriginal culture and heritage available in the school systems and for the Canadian mainstream public."

"Yes, it allows people to understand their history and why things are the way they are. It allows people to actually sit and talk to an Aboriginal person. It helps to break down stereotypes."

"Yes, the context of Aboriginal experiences is how it is shared with the community, on the land, by the people and their connection to it."

"Yes, we are working to preserve our language through Woodlands Cultural Centre. The criteria for assistance need to be more attentive and culturally sensitive to the issues at the regional level in order to support and share Aboriginal culture."

"Definitely, the knowledge and information that non-Aboriginal Canadians are receiving is not very factual and in some cases the facts are being ignored. Tourism and heritage allows the story to be told. Cultural tourism helps to understand the culture, rather than the history of colonization.

ADVISORY CIRCLE REPORT

1.0 Executive Summary

The need to better understand the relationship between culture/heritage and tourism resulted in the formation of a federal-provincial-territorial initiative (FPT) in which the Aboriginal Cultures and Tourism Working Group (ACTWG) was established. ACTWG was formed to research and develop the necessary tools that would strengthen the relationship between Aboriginal culture and heritage sectors and other tourism stakeholders. The ACTWG have undertaken a number of parallel projects to assist them in determining the full scope of this relationship including a three-phase study entitled *Aboriginal Tourism and Cross-Cultural Understanding Project*. This report represents the final phase of this project. By undertaking this project, the ACTWG hoped to identify and explore some of the perceived and actual barriers for this sector along with best practices that demonstrate how Aboriginal cultural and heritage initiatives may successfully engage and educate Canadians about Aboriginal peoples and cultures.

The initial phases of the study included research on international case studies and a national survey (as outlined below in the Project Background) leading the ACTWG to invite ten Aboriginal culture and heritage partners to participate in the Advisory Circle (AC) to conclude the project. The AC was an accurate reflection of the Aboriginal Cultural Tourism sector (ACT) sector representing a range of Aboriginal cultures, ownership structures and regions of Canada. The ACTWG utilized the findings in the earlier reports to guide the dialogue within the two-day meeting allowing the AC to form recommendations on how the federal-provincial-territorial partners may support this sector in their role of educating Canadians about Aboriginal peoples and cultures.

The consensus within the AC was that Aboriginal cultural and heritage sectors, including tourism initiatives, are positioned to play an important role in educating Canadians about the culture and history of their community. There was little distinction between an Aboriginal tourism initiative and a cultural and heritage initiative as they shared common objectives to share and promote their communities' culture, further demonstrating the importance of the ACTWG. The AC made a number of recommendations on best practices and next steps that are explored in this final report including:

Best Practices

- Developing and delivering an authentic Aboriginal cultural experience that supports the community's vision and self determination
- Delivering an accurate and educational message to visitors that reflects the community's values and beliefs
- Meeting visitors' expectations for a "welcoming" and quality experience

Recommendations

- Increase funding to ensure that economic sustainability does not outweigh the cultural sustainability and integrity of the experience
- Increase the capacity of the sector with investment in human resource training and development for both front line and management
- Create an Advisory Circle to continue communication between the sector and FPT partners through the ACTWG

- Evaluate the success of ACT as a cross-cultural tool through a study which would identify Canadian visitor expectations and then conduct a national survey of ACT visitors to evaluate their response to the experience

2.0 Project Background

The initial research undertaken in Phase One of this project included the exploration of international case studies to gain a global perspective on the relationship between tourism and the indigenous communities of New Zealand, Australia and Canada, though research available in Canada was limited. The case studies identified successful approaches, strategies and concerns by host operators and communities in their efforts to utilize tourism as a method for increasing cross-cultural understanding. The research also revealed best practices and challenges within the Aboriginal cultural tourism industry in its efforts in reconciliation and education of the public through the authentic interpretation of culture. Although some of Canada's primary challenges and best practices were identified within the research, the consultants determined the most effective approach would be to develop a community consultation process.

In order to gain greater insight into the issues from the perspective of those directly involved in Canada's Aboriginal cultural tourism (ACT) industry, a national survey of Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences was launched as the second phase of this project. The national survey was designed to reveal some successful approaches, strategies and concerns of ACT industry leaders in their efforts to use tourism as a method for increasing cross-cultural understanding within Canada. An initial contact list of 120 ACT initiatives across Canada was developed as the survey base. The initial database incorporated a broad range of ACT initiatives, from private enterprises to community non-profit cultural centers, government affiliated initiatives and non-governmental organizations, with representation across all regions of Canada. Over a twelve-week period, the consultants were successful in implementing the survey with 60 respondents, continuing to ensure representation from all regions and the various sectors that comprise Canada's ACT industry.

2.1 Advisory Circle Methodology

Through the survey process, ten participants were identified who offered exceptional insight and best practices within the industry and were invited to participate in the next phase of the project: *The Advisory Circle*. The Advisory Circle (AC), hosted in Gatineau, Quebec, was developed as a two-day workshop with the first day consisting of facilitated dialogue exploring the main concepts identified in the survey to provide further insight and direction on the issues, recommendations and next steps. On the second day, participants had an opportunity to visit local Aboriginal cultural tourism initiatives, including the Canadian Museum of Civilization's First Peoples Hall, Aboriginal Experiences in Ottawa and Mawandoseg in Kitigan Zibi, Quebec, with behind the scenes information on community involvement, curation and best practices.

An important element in creating the Advisory Circle was reflecting the diversity of Aboriginal cultural tourism stakeholders to ensure representation from all sectors, Aboriginal cultures, regions of Canada, and the community circle of youth and elders. The final AC consisted of both elders and youth; representation from all regions of Canada and with First Nations, Inuit and Métis participants as well as a voice from all sectors involved in this industry, including:

non-profit, community-operated ventures; private sector ventures; and partnerships with FPT partners such as Parks Canada. This small group was an accurate reflection of the Aboriginal cultural and tourism industries of Canada. Although they represented diverse sectors, the discussions and ultimate recommendations shared by the participants demonstrated common themes that supported earlier findings in the research and survey.

2.2 Advisory Circle Participants

- **Pam Ward, Metepenagiag Heritage Park (New Brunswick)**
  A respected ACT stakeholder from the east, opening a multi-million dollar cultural centre at a sacred site after thirty years of community planning.
- **Vania Gagnon, Riel House National Historical Site of Canada (Manitoba)**
  Owned by Parks Canada and operating in partnership with Métis communities, Riel House protects, preserves and shares Métis history.
- **Eva Aariak, Piruvik Centre (Nunavut)**
  An Inuit cultural centre offering programs of language, culture and well-being.
- **Laurel Mould, K'San Historical Village and Museum (British Columbia)**
  The first Aboriginal museum to open in Canada in the early 1970s.
- **Vera Kasokeo, Chief Poundmaker Historical Centre (Saskatchewan)**
  A community-operated museum in Battlefield that opened in 1996.
- **Paula Whitlow, Chiefswood (Ontario)**
  A National Historical Site that is operated on Canada's largest First Nation.
- **Cindy Charlie, Tage Cho Hudan Interpretive Centre (Yukon)**
  A youth who is the manager of their interpretation centre, open 10 years.
- **Mike Côté, Mawandoseg (Quebec)**
  Entrepreneur operating an award-winning private ACT initiative on reserve.
- **Linnea Battel, Xa:ytem Longhouse Interpretive Centre (British Columbia)**
  A non-profit cultural centre located on an ancient sacred site, over 9000 years old and operated by a First Nations board of directors representing 24 communities.
- **Dr. Eleonore Tecumseh Sioui (Quebec)**
  A respected elder honoured throughout the world for her cultural and literary contributions.
- **Rosa John, Kehewin Native Performance (Alberta)**
  Guest and facilitator, Rosa is founder and Artistic Director of KNP (theatre/dance)

3.0 Best Practices and Impediments --Delivering an Authentic ACT Product

In the *Aboriginal Tourism and Cross-Cultural Understanding* background report, the statement is made that "the achievement of sustainable indigenous tourism has predominantly focused on the need for development that is culturally sustainable, that is, owned, controlled, acceptable and desired by the indigenous communities affected, as well as economically sustainable" (McIntosh, 2003:6). When considering the relationship with culture and heritage in a tourism environment, we understand that this would be one of the most critical elements of concern for the FPT partners. Through the Advisory Circle, we were able to identify a number of Best Practices in the development and delivery of an accurate and authentic message that helps to

ensure the community's continued support and reduce the negative impacts of ACT on the community and culture presented.

3.1 Aboriginal Ownership and Control

For many members of the AC, ownership and control seemed to be an obvious point. Communities need to have both actual and perceived ownership as well as control in the ACT initiative, as this is key to community empowerment; however, through the open dialogue they discovered that some communities still struggle for this basic principle. One of the members, who is located on traditional sacred grounds, is still in negotiations with their province for ownership of the sacred lands. It can be noted that the development of an ACT initiative on the sacred site ensures its continued protection under the guidance of the community. Other communities have successfully negotiated ownership and/or control over their initiative with signed agreements between communities and Parks Canada, designation as national and provincial historical sites, and other key partnership agreements. It was also noted that it was positive to see private enterprise represented as a form of Aboriginal ownership and control and AC members felt this should be encouraged within communities.

3.2 "Preserve, promote and protect culture"

Although often considered a tourism product, it was interesting to discover that most of the AC participants had a primary mandate to "preserve, promote and protect" their communities' cultures. There was consensus among the group that their programs and sites played an important role in creating an understanding and awareness of Aboriginal culture and heritage for Canadians. The AC took this role very seriously, citing that their organizations were not about making money; they were about sharing "who Aboriginal people are" and engaging both Aboriginal communities and mainstream Canadians in learning more about this important aspect of Canadian history and culture.

ACT sites and programs are sometimes based on sacred sites and are often home to community historical artifacts and oral histories, all integral components of their community's history. The sites play an important role in educating Aboriginal children and youth through their ability to preserve the community's culture and heritage for future generations. As elders pass on and take their teachings with them, these sites may become the most accurate and authentic source of information for the communities on their own culture and heritage.

All AC members recognize the role of empowerment that they play in passing on the traditional skills and knowledge to the future generations of Aboriginal children and youth. Whether they were located on reserve or in urban communities, all AC members extended opportunities for the community to become engaged in the programming, expanding their cultural and traditional knowledge and skills. Some of the best practices shared included engaging the Aboriginal community in the culture through allowing open, free access to all community members; designating the venue for community use on particular nights of the week, and offering arts and theatre training to youth in the community.

3.3 Community Consultation and Support

One of the most difficult elements of ACT is that it portrays and shares something that does not belong to any one person or organization – the culture belongs to all the people. To be successful in both the development and the delivery of ACT, it is integral that the community be consulted. Within the AC, a number of community consultation processes were utilized to gain support, receive guidance on the programs and "messaging", as well as create a feeling of ownership through the process.

However, one important element tied all of them together- all AC members had consulted the community and then accepted the boundaries that were established on what could be shared with the visitors and what was to remain sacred to the community.
In all cases, the elders of the community were engaged in the process to set the direction of what could be shared in the context of tourism. In one community, the elders will not allow visitors to access the spiritual grounds that are the foundational basis for the ACT development. The centre is being developed in the vicinity of the actual sacred site, allowing only a general panoramic view, and interpreters will introduce the significance of the site and why their actual location must remain protected. It was noted that when the community and elders were not part of the process, sacred space may become public property and may no longer be accessible to the community for its intended purpose, as in the case of the Petroglyphs Teaching Rocks outside of Peterborough, Ontario.

The ways in which the communities were consulted on the content and delivery of the cultural message was as diverse as the communities themselves - proving that there is no "cookie cutter" approach that can be implemented in all Aboriginal communities. Some organizations began with informal elders circles and focus groups while others emphasized that it was integral to tie into the community planning process. For one community, the process began 32 years ago when an elder brought forth the importance of protecting the community's sacred grounds leading the community to pursue national and provincial historical site status. Recognizing the importance of the initiative on all future generations, the community will have completed over 30 years of planning and consultation before the opening of the facility, scheduled for May 2007. All members agree that it is comprehensive community planning that ties it all together; when the community is part of the development process, they feel a sense of ownership, further emphasizing that Chief and Council may change, but the plan is "living" and reflects the priorities of the community.

However, it can be difficult to gain consensus through a community consultation process, as all elders do not agree on what is sacred and what can be shared. In some regions, the ACT sites are developed on sacred lands and the programming may share elements of sacred teachings and ceremony, while other communities have been asked by the elders to exclude all ceremonial and spiritual elements from the programming. In other regions, community consultation extends beyond the elders, and recognizes family clans and family protocols where the families must be approached before sharing, in a tourism context, the songs, stories and dance that belong to them.

3.4 Aboriginal Languages

The Advisory Circle discussed the importance of Aboriginal languages and the key role that language plays in cultural sustainability. Most agreed that their elders stressed that to lose

language is to lose culture; language holds the key to traditional knowledge and teachings. A few of the participants identified that traditional language was a barrier for them because elders insisted that it be represented in their programming. Because so few young people within the community had learned to speak their traditional language, this made it difficult to hire staff.

A number of other participants shared their communities' best practices by incorporating and sharing Aboriginal languages with their visitors. In Nunavut, Inuktitut is recognized as the official language above English and one participant offers language classes and services – in fact they just completed teaching all Nunavut Deputy Minister's Inuktitut and translated Microsoft programs into Inuktitut. While many other AC members incorporate their local languages orally to some degree in their programming, one of the organizations represented has utilized their language in all interpretive materials and displays throughout their site.

4.0 Best Practices and Impediments -- Educating Canadians About Aboriginal Culture

4.1 Development and Delivery of the Message

If ACT is to be considered a cross-cultural educational experience, the information must be of educational value and offer an enriched learning experience, highlighting the community's own perspective of its culture, history and heritage. As outlined above, the involvement of the community and elders in the development of the site and delivery of the message will help to ensure that an accurate and authentic message, one that the community can continue to support, is shared with Canadian visitors. One organization operates under a historical society that collaborates with community, elders and academics/teachers to determine the "messaging" and interpretation to meet the needs of educational markets. All others had some mechanism in place to ensure that the message was accurate, ranging from elders' cultural training for interpretative staff to scripted materials approved by Band and Council.

For the message to remain valid, it is important that it be delivered from a member of the community being portrayed. All AC members concur that the involvement of their community on the front line is integral to the educational experience. All organizations had a primary staff base of Aboriginal people, ranging from 50% to 100% representation of front line and management.

Another important consideration introduced was balancing visitors' expectations of the type of traditional experience they could anticipate with an accurate portrayal of contemporary Aboriginal society. Portraying contemporary issues and lifestyles can ensure that visitors do not continue to believe that community daily life is comprised of tipis and feathers.

A recurring theme in any of the discussions on sustainability and visitor expectations was training and capacity development within the ACT industry. In terms of developing and delivering the message, this applies to front line interpretation staff as well as curators of exhibits and programs. When one considers that, for many Canadians, this may be their initial opportunity to interact with "Aboriginal Canada", the first impression of the information and how it is delivered is extremely important. The interpreters must have a sound foundation of cultural knowledge (often difficult to secure in the typical youth workforce of tourism) and be effectively

trained in the delivery of the message, including how to deal with the sensitive issues surrounding Canadian and Aboriginal relations that are inevitable in discussions.

4.2 Educational Markets

While they hope to reach all Canadians with their message, the majority of AC members envision that the most successful path to reconciliation through tourism is in reaching the younger generations by offering educational programs to student visitors. All agreed with one AC member's statement that "we will change Canadians' beliefs about Aboriginal people through the children and we need to start by changing their opinions so that our children do not endure the same misperceptions that we are faced with today." Almost all members offered programming that was developed to help share, celebrate and teach Aboriginal culture with students of different age groups. One site receives an annual visitation of 15,000 to their sacred site, of which 11,000 are children. Other members have worked in collaboration with teachers to develop materials and messaging that support the education students receive in the classroom while taking into consideration the appropriateness of the message from the community's perspective.

5.0 Best Practices and Impediments -- Meeting Visitor Expectations

5.1 The "Welcome" Message

A View From the Outside: Predispositions and Expectations of Non-Aboriginal Canadians Toward Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Experiences Through Travel revealed a variety of perceptions and barriers that are currently limiting Aboriginal communities' participation in tourism. One of the primary perceptions and/or barriers identified through these focus groups was that Canadians are hesitant to visit ACT sites, citing apprehension of an unwelcoming, hostile environment based on their exposure to negative stereotypes of Aboriginal communities and people.

While alarming, this perception did not seem to be news to any of the AC members. Many communities represented have already implemented initiatives to ensure a more "welcoming" environment and invitation for Canadian visitors. It was shared that Aboriginal Tourism British Columbia has adopted a marketing theme based on "Welcome" in a traditional language to overcome Canadian tourist perceptions. Many other communities offer "Welcome" signage upon entering the community and tourist signage throughout –both to help the tourist feel comfortable and to ensure they are guided to appropriate areas. Many community tourism development plans take the visitor's expectations of a welcoming environment into account with locations close to highways in "safe", familiar tourist environments. Another best practice identified was the development of either oral or written visitor cultural protocols, to help the visitor feel more informed when entering the community on what to expect and how to respect local traditions and cultures.

Not all communities who are involved in tourism are completely supportive and welcoming of visitors. Some AC members identified that some community members do not welcome tourists into their community. This was the case for one participant who represents several different

communities with conflicting interest in hosting tourists. Another community developed their ACT site as an answer to the "tourist problem" so that the tourists would have an appropriate destination within the community that meets their cultural tourism needs without interfering with community life.

5.2 Meeting Visitor Expectations

One participant accurately commented that it is difficult to determine how successful they have been in meeting visitor expectations when they don't have a clear indication of what those expectations are. For ACT stakeholders, it is often a fine balance of meeting the expectations of the community in developing and delivering a program that the community can support, while meeting the expectations of the tourists visiting the site. While some best practices were shared in gauging the success in meeting visitor expectations, one participant noted that it was interesting that none have evaluated their success in meeting the community's expectations.

The consensus around the circle was that many tourists visiting ACT sites had unrealistic perceptions of Aboriginal people as an ancient civilization that has not evolved. Some members felt that they needed to defend and justify their community's evolution to a contemporary society and often fielded questions about living in tipis and other stereotypical images. The best practice identified was a balance of meeting those visitor expectations of a cultural experience of ancient arts, traditions or stories combined with a realistic view of how Aboriginal cultures are maintained today. Additionally, some best practices were shared on overcoming the stereotypical images by using humour in the response, citing that a trained interpreter should be able to "share our culture without making others feel badly about their own."

There were a number of evaluation tools and methods being utilized within organizations of the AC including:

- ***Visitor Exit Surveys.*** A select few of the AC members have implemented visitor surveys to determine their success in meeting visitor expectations. One site developed its own brief survey for teachers, with three brief questions evaluating program and interpretation. The response by teachers was higher then expected. Another participant implemented a more detailed survey developed by their regional Aboriginal tourism association (RATA), which provided comprehensive results, but was difficult to administer due to its length. Another site that is federally owned, but managed by the Aboriginal community, has implemented three different visitor surveys over the past ten years to evaluate and enhance its continually developing program.

- ***Guest Books and Visitor Feedback.*** While all AC members utilize guest books, they agree that it is not necessarily an accurate reflection of visitors experiences as they are not likely to record negative experiences. Many of the AC members who were directly involved in front line interpretation felt that the visitors' natural reactions and interest level in the program are an accurate reflection. One member went "undercover" to informally ask guests leaving the site how they found their experiences in order to receive a natural and honest reaction.

- ***Mystery Shoppers.*** Two of the AC participants are located in provinces that offer "Mystery Shoppers" to help all tourism products strive to meet visitor and industry standards and expectations. In New Brunswick, members of Tourism New Brunswick agree in advance to

have an industry professional arrive at their site unannounced to evaluate all aspects of their program in relation to what would be expected by visitors. Full reports are sent to the participants offering feedback on everything from interpretation to customer service, sometimes even commenting on environmental impacts.

While most members of the AC felt that they were successful in meeting visitor expectations in terms of programming, many commented that they are not able to meet the expectations of tourists in terms of infrastructure and visibility. Tourists visiting museums, cultural sites and national/provincial parks have come to expect basic infrastructure that is often beyond the means of the host community, including buildings, signage, parking and accessibility. Additionally, visitors have expressed that it is difficult to find an ACT organization in their region due to limited knowledge of the existence of such sites. Little or no marketing budgets affect the ACT sites' ability to have effective signage, distribute marketing materials and to participate within regional marketing efforts.

6.0 Common Challenges / Identified Needs

6.1 Funding / Economic Sustainability

The fundamental challenge that all ACT stakeholders face is that economic sustainability constantly challenges the cultural sustainability and integrity of the experience they are offering. Many ACT products are reliant on support from their community, which is struggling with internal priorities of health and social needs. With all issues fighting for the same dollars, it is easy to understand how cultural preservation does not take priority over these essential needs. If located on a reserve community with no municipal tax base, the situation becomes even more difficult.

One participant stated that although they are able to access funding to build and create cultural sites they are often not able to secure operational funds. Money is needed for the creation of programs, procurement and protection of artifacts, human resources and maintenance. Communities are burdened with these expenses and rely on unpredictable tourist dollars to sustain their operations, despite the fact that tourists do not always recognize the value of cultural experiences.

Another challenge that was common among participants was difficulty in accessing existing funding sources for support. Despite offering successful programs that, "fulfill the mandate" of government organizations and programs, many ACT organizations are not successful in securing financial support. Most participants felt that this challenge may be reflective of the capacity and skills of ACT managers in completing grant applications rather than the validity of the organizations applying. One participant commented that they are still a very oral community and find the application process and terminology very difficult to navigate successfully.

All AC members agreed that the lack of funding and resources is their most pressing need and makes it difficult for them to overcome any of the other challenges as identified within this report. In general terms, cultural tourism needs to be "healthy", before it is sustainable. For cultural tourism to be successful in delivering the intended message it requires investment so that visitors' expectations are met.

6.2 Human Resources and Capacity Development

The quality of the visitor experience varies greatly depending on the employee who is representing the organization – making it essential to have a trained and empowered workforce in ACT, within both management and on the frontline. All AC members expressed difficulty in accessing a qualified workforce to deliver their message, often leaving curators and managers to deliver the programs. Some community- operated initiatives operate as a "one man show", paying minimum wages to management who are expected to double as front line interpretation. Private businesses face similar challenges, competing for a student workforce in communities with extensive "band jobs" paying higher wages for less work. Training and capacity development are the core issue in human resources; it is evident that communities need support and investment in their cultural tourism workforce in order to succeed.

Some of the training and capacity needs identified were:

- ***Front line training***. One member participated in Interpreters Canada, which offer two levels of training. While *Superhost* front line training can provide basic skills, a cultural component and teachings are also essential. In British Columbia, there is an Aboriginal front line tourism-training course called First Host that combines the two.

- ***Management capacity***. Although curation of cultural exhibits and development of cultural programming were mentioned, the common theme identified by AC participants was an increased capacity in securing economic sustainability for their ACT initiative. AC felt that support was needed to increase the capacity of management skills that would assist in the process of accessing funding through government support. Furthermore, they identified a need to increase capacity and understanding of promotions and marketing of their ACT organization that would increase self-generated revenues.

6.3 Infrastructure

As some members noted, ACT operators are often not able to meet basic visitor expectations in terms of the infrastructure that visitors expect at a tourist site. When competing for community infrastructure dollars, cultural and tourism initiatives have difficulty demonstrating their value beyond the basic infrastructure and survival needs of the community. While they may be able to access funding to develop and build their cultural and heritage sites, they could not continue basic operations and maintenance of the existing infrastructure, without sustaining levels of funding.

7.0 Recommendations and Actions

7.1 Increased Funding

- It comes as no surprise that the overwhelming response from AC participants was that if FPT partners recognize the true value of ACT as an educational tool for both Aboriginal communities and the Canadian public, FPT jurisdictions need to invest in it. Most felt that Aboriginal cultural and heritage initiates were expected to fill the government's mandate in

the protection, promotion and preservation of cultures without the investment to back it up. They recommend that increased support is essential in:

- Human resource and capacity development – tools and programs for front line and management involved in Aboriginal cultures and tourism
- Basic operations and maintenance of ACT sites and programs
- Promotion of ACT to Canadians through marketing and promotions to increase visitation/reach and long-term sustainability through revenues
- Promotion of ACT benefits within Aboriginal communities to secure more support

Consensus around the circle stressed that market-ready ACT initiatives do exist and that timing was of the essence – they want action, not more discussion. They recommend identifying some ACT initiatives that have successfully developed an authentic learning experience and helping them to increase the reach of their message with Canadian visitors through a pilot program.

7.2 Creation of an "Advisory Circle"

All participants of the AC felt that a circle had been formed during this workshop and that the circle should continue. They expressed fear that they volunteered their time, and traveled across Canada to begin important discussions and to provide recommendations that would "sit on a shelf" if the initiative was not continued. They felt it was important to continue the dialogue within the sector and have a collective voice in taking that message forward to all levels of government. They also felt very strongly that the ACTWG should continue its work and act as the liaison between the industry and government partners at all levels. Furthermore, they stated that the relationship between Aboriginal communities and government needs to be fostered and the ACTWG should be privy to the continued feedback of experts in the field through the voice of an Advisory Circle to ensure that all levels of government provide adequate support to Aboriginal cultures and tourism in their programs. It was recommended that the Advisory Circle formed could continue to meet over the phone, to use communication tools already developed (outlined below) and hold annual meetings with partners.

7.3 Communication

One of the most prominent issues identified in the capacity development of Aboriginal communities in the culture and heritage sectors was the lack of opportunity to share resources and information among communities, which are often isolated. The AC recommends the development of a nation-wide communication tool that could provide multifaceted benefits to both communities and government partners. It would allow communities to act as mentors for other communities – sharing information on sources of funding and support, proposal writing, training opportunities, arts and cultural programming and marketing/promotional opportunities. It would also provide a forum for continued communication among the AC members and potentially provide a link between government departments and sectors of ACT. The AC recommended a review of the potential options for the ACTWG to explore, including an online community forum, a list serve (similar to the Canmuse listserv hosted by the Canadian Heritage Information Network), target sites or other options.

7.4 Evaluation

In order to validate ACT as a cross-cultural educational tool for Canadians, it is first necessary to identify the expectations of Canadian visitors and then monitor the effectiveness of ACT in meeting those expectations. As this is not something that can be accomplished by individual sites, they recommend this as a future activity for the ACTWG. Some of the recommendations made for future consideration were:

- Development of a more user-friendly survey to be implemented by ACT sites with Canadian visitors nationwide. It was stressed that a simple survey of only a few questions would be manageable for most ACT initiatives to deliver.
- ACTWG could expand upon the findings in this project with a more extensive pilot project which identified Canadian's expectations in an ACT experience and then evaluated the success of the sector in meeting those expectations through the administration of a survey delivered at select ACT sites across Canada.
- The Mystery Shopper concept could be tailored to provide in-depth feedback to ACT sites, identifying best practices and Canadian visitor reactions.

7.5 Marketing and Promotion

The Advisory Circle identified the importance of marketing and promotional campaigns that are multi-faceted, reaching both Aboriginal communities and Canadian visitors.

- A promotional campaign should be developed to create more interest in Aboriginal culture and heritage experiences with Canadian visitors. A national guide could be developed as part of the campaign, highlighting various Aboriginal regions and introducing Aboriginal cultural sites in Canada. Partnerships with existing organizations such as Aboriginal Tourism Canada, the Canadian Tourism Commission and Parks Canada could be considered.
- Additionally, an awareness campaign reaching Aboriginal communities across Canada highlighting the value of ACT in preserving and promoting positive experiences of Aboriginal cultures and heritage could be developed. This campaign would help to build greater community support for ACT initiatives and potentially increase community involvement in the cultural opportunities provided.

REFERENCES

Carr, Anna. "Mountain Places, Cultural Spaces: The Interpretation of Culturally Significant Landscapes." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 12, 5, (2004): 432-458.

Dyer, Pam , etal. "Tourism impacts on an Australian indigenous community: a Djabugay case study." *Tourism Management* , 24 (2000): 83-95.

Hager, Barbara. "Aboriginal Cultural Tourism: Promoting your history to the World." Destinations, National Gathering on Aboriginal Cultures and Tourism Discussion Paper, p. 1-7

Higgins-Desbiolles, Freya. "Globalisation and Indigenous Tourism." In Globalisation: Australian Regional Perspectives. Edited by Martin Shanahan and Gerry Treuren. Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 2003, p. 240-262.

Higgins-Desbiolles, Freya. "Reconciliation Tourism: Tourism Healing Divided Societies!" *Tourism Recreation Research,* 28, 3, (2003): p. 35-44

Karhakeron Diabo, Mitchell, "Aboriginal cultures and the tourism industry," Destinations, National Gathering on Aboriginal Cultures and Tourism Discussion Paper. p. 1-6.

McIntosh, Alison. "Tourists appreciation of Maori culture in New Zealand." Tourism Management, 25 (2003): p.1-15.

Notzke, Claudia. "Indigenous Tourism Development in Southern Alberta, Canada: Tentative Engagement." Journal of Sustainable Tourism, 12, 1 (2004): p. 29-51